United Nations A/56/PV.86

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Friday, 14 December 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Statement by the President on the occasion of the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations

The President: As members know, I have just returned from Oslo, Norway, where I had the great honour to accept the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the United Nations. I was also honoured to attend that occasion along with Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who accepted the prize on his own behalf. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all the family members of the entire United Nations system and to pay tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

Since this was the first time that the United Nations as a whole was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, I was especially pleased that the major United Nations organs and various agencies were also represented at the ceremony. I wish that all the representatives of the Member States could have been there as well. The Nobel Peace Prize belongs to each of them as much as to any other member of the United Nations family.

Surely this award is meant to offer encouragement to the men and women of the United Nations in carrying out their work. Such encouragement will be especially welcome to the thousands of United Nations personnel who serve under extremely difficult conditions, often at grave risk to themselves. While we can be justly proud of what the United Nations has accomplished, we should also look ahead to the many daunting challenges that still lie before us, such as terrorism, poverty, drug abuse and trafficking, HIV/AIDS and environmental degradation. These challenges cannot be met by any single Member State or by any single organization alone.

Since 1945, the international community and the peoples of the world have exerted their best efforts, often with high hopes, for the realization of global peace and well-being through the United Nations. Our efforts have not always been successful or our successes always permanent, but we should not be discouraged. I have no doubt that, were it not for the United Nations, humankind could hardly have advanced as far as it has in realizing the vision of the United Nations founding fathers in 1945. The indispensable role of the United Nations was clearly recognized by Chairman Berge of the Norwegian Nobel Committee at the award ceremony in the following words: "The only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations."

Finally, let me mention that I will closely consult with the representatives of the major organs and Member States about how to utilize the prize money which the United Nations has received from the Nobel Committee.

In concluding my brief report, I join with representatives in celebrating the award of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize as both recognition of past achievements and a spur to even greater efforts in the future.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-69700 (E)

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Draft resolution (A/56/L.10)

Amendment (A/56/L.11)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this item at its 30th plenary meeting, on 22 October.

I call on the representative of Australia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.10.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Australia, in its capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has the honour to introduce the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA, as contained in document A/56/L.10.

The draft resolution is sponsored by 50 countries, as follows: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Romania, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Yugoslavia.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continues to make a vital contribution to international security. The Agency plays a key role in our collective efforts to achieve the twin goals of peace and development by ensuring that the benefits of nuclear technology are shared globally, by building and maintaining a global nuclear safety regime and by preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring the security of nuclear material and facilities.

Following the tragic events of 11 September, the work of the IAEA has taken on even greater significance, as Member States have become united in their concern about terrorism and in their recognition of the important role of the IAEA in providing an international response to increased risks of nuclear terrorism. Through the General Assembly's annual resolution on the report of the IAEA, we are able to take note of the Agency's important work and to affirm our confidence in its role in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The draft resolution we are introducing today is the product of an exhaustive process of open-ended negotiation among delegations in Vienna — where Member States' expertise on nuclear issues is focused — and subsequent, equally exhaustive consultations in New York. The approach taken among experts in Vienna in drawing up the draft resolution was to draw on agreed language from previous substantive General Assembly resolutions on the IAEA, updated and amended as necessary to take account of the outcomes of the most recent session of the IAEA General Conference, which was held, as the Assembly is aware, in September 2001. The draft resolution is a faithful reflection of the Agency's work and the General Conference resolutions.

As many delegations stated during the consideration of this agenda item last year, it was disappointing that the General Assembly was unable at its fifty-fifth session to adopt a substantive resolution on the work of the IAEA. This was particularly so, given that the Agency itself has a long history of making decisions in Vienna on the basis of consensus. Many States have therefore worked hard in Vienna and New York to ensure that a substantive resolution could be adopted by the General Assembly this year. Significant investments have been made in the draft resolution, with hard compromises made on key issues such as integrated safeguards, the role of innovative nuclear technology and the safe transport of radioactive material.

In view of the comprehensive and transparent process of consultation which has taken place in Vienna and New York, it is the strong wish of the 50 sponsors of the draft resolution, and of the Director General of the IAEA, that the draft resolution be adopted as it stands, without further amendment. We look forward to the Assembly's support for the draft resolution and its endorsement of the important work of the IAEA.

The President: I now call on the representative of Iraq to introduce the draft amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation has presented a draft amendment, contained in document A/56/L.11, to the draft resolution entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", which would be inserted as a new paragraph after paragraph 12.

We fully understand that this draft resolution is the result of consultations in Vienna and that there were other delegations that had wished to amend it in ways that would reflect their interests. Despite our strong reservations with regard to paragraph 12 of the draft resolution, which demands that Iraq implement relevant Security Council resolutions, with which Iraq has actually complied throughout the past decade, my delegation did not object to its inclusion, for the sake of reaching consensus and adopting a substantive draft resolution.

However, considering the draft resolution an unbalanced and selective document that neglects the verification activities carried out in Iraq by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), my delegation presented its draft amendment. The draft amendment is actually a quotation from what the IAEA states in its reports to the General Assembly and to the Security Council regarding the IAEA's implementation of the safeguards agreement in Iraq, referred to in documents S/2000/300, S/2001/337, S/2001/26, S/2001/129 and S/2000/120 and in the IAEA report presented to the current session of the General Assembly contained in document A/56/313. From among these, I would like to quote from a letter dated 10 April 2000 from the Director General of the IAEA addressed to the President of the Security Council:

> "As I informed the IAEA Board of Governors during its recent meeting, the Agency inspectors were able to verify the nuclear material subject to safeguards, which consists of low enriched, natural and depleted uranium. Iraq provided the necessary cooperation for the inspection team to perform its activities effectively and efficiently". *(S/2000/300, p. 3)*

This fact was stated in the resolution concerning Iraq recently adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA in Vienna, contained in document GC(45)/RES/17.

I hope that the General Assembly will decide that the main element in considering this draft resolution should be transparency, not selectivity that would reflect the political agenda of one or two States. Representatives should be careful not to set the precedent of a political resolution that would not send the right message to the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We should not forget that we are talking about the cornerstone of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which carries out the safeguards agreements between Member States and the IAEA. We hope that representatives will support our draft amendment, which simply reflects what the IAEA reports have stated regarding this matter.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia on a point of order.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I should like, on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.10, to raise a point of order in connection with the amendment contained in A/56/L.11. On behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, I formally move, under the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, that no action be taken on that amendment. I should also like to request a recorded vote.

Draft resolution A/56/L.10 is the product of an intensive, transparent negotiating process, which took place among experts in Vienna over many weeks. The process included many open-ended meetings at which all delegations were given ample opportunity to present and defend their proposals. The amendment proposed in document A/56/L.11, which was introduced by Iraq, was considered during that exhaustive consultative process. At the conclusion of that process there was no agreement to incorporate that amendment proposal.

In New York, open-ended consultations were also convened, and delegations had a further opportunity to present and defend amendment proposals. No agreement was reached for the further amendment of the draft resolution, which is widely viewed as reflecting a fair compromise, after weeks of negotiation among experts. This draft resolution is traditionally based on the resolutions adopted at the annual General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna. This year's draft was again based on the principle, accepted by all during the consultative process, that the United Nations General Assembly draft resolution should be faithful to the resolutions of the IAEA General Conference. The amendment proposed by Iraq does not accord with the relevant General Conference resolution on Iraq, resolution GC(45)/RES/17.

Bearing in mind the fact that the draft resolution is the product of a comprehensive and transparent process of negotiation, the sponsors believe that a no-action motion on the proposed amendment in A/56/L.11 would be the best means of ensuring that the substantive draft resolution, in its current form, is adopted by the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session. We therefore hope that the no-action motion will be supported.

The President: The representative of Australia has moved, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11. Rule 74 reads as follows:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

Mr. Coutts (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile believes that the draft resolution in A/56/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", is the outcome of a broad and transparent negotiation process, carried out in both Vienna and New York. Given this fact, we believe that taking no action on the proposal contained in document A/56/L.11 would be the most appropriate way for the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution, in its current form.

For that reason, we second the no-action motion put forward by the representative of Australia.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union would like to recall that it attaches great importance to the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a result, we sincerely hope that the substantive draft resolution in A/56/L.10, which is before the Assembly today, will shortly be adopted in its current form.

For reasons that have just been set out by the delegation of Australia, the European Union would like to express its unreserved support for the no-action motion with regard to the draft amendment in A/56/L.11 — the motion just made by the delegation of Australia on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution. We call on delegations to vote in favour of the motion to take no action so that draft resolution A/56/L.10 can be voted upon in its current form.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation would like to ask delegations to vote against the no-action motion that is intended to deprive a Member State of its right to express its position with regard to a draft resolution and to introduce a paragraph that would reflect the simple truth, as expressed in the reports of the International Atomic Energy Agency on its activities carried out in Iraq.

I hope that delegations will take a stand against the introduction into the General Assembly of a veto that is designed to achieve political ends.

Miss Thomas (Jamaica): While taking into consideration the arguments that have been put forward, my delegation believes that, on a point of principle, any Member State has a right to have its proposals considered. While we do not necessarily support the substance of A/56/L.11, we believe that any Member State has the right to present a proposal. We therefore oppose the no-action motion.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the motion by the representative of Australia that no action be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia,

Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yugoslavia

Against:

Algeria, Cuba, Jamaica, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Botswana, China, Djibouti, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Togo, Venezuela, Zambia

The motion for no action was carried by 96 votes to 7, with 20 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Since the motion for no action has carried, no action will be taken on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11.

We shall therefore take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.10.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.10.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. Marcus (United States of America): Paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 does not reflect what was agreed at the General Conference in a balanced way and is thus objectionable. Agreements reached in Vienna should be respected as we pursue our efforts in New York. We regret that this has not been the case.

Mr. Govrin (Israel): Israel attaches great importance to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to the tradition of consensus in this Organization.

The report of the IAEA, which reflects the work of the Agency, taking into consideration efforts made by the Members of the Organization to promote the important tasks of the Agency, should also reflect agreed language. Unfortunately, the wording of paragraph 10 of the draft resolution on the report of the IAEA does not reflect that cooperative spirit.

The draft resolutions on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East have been adopted by consensus since 1991. Their language represents a delicate balance reached after long and difficult negotiations aimed at achieving consensus. Israel has joined that consensus because we support the goal of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in due course, notwithstanding certain reservations regarding the modalities.

Paragraph 10 of the draft resolution on the IAEA report represents the General Conference resolution on the application of IAEA safeguards in the Middle East in a selective and unbalanced way. Paragraph 10 contains some components from the resolution, but ignores others. This attempt to introduce a new interpretation of the compromise consensus resolution on the Middle East is unacceptable, and may damage the common understanding required for reaching consensus on this issue.

Israel will vote against paragraph 10 of the draft resolution.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The core element of the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which was reached on 21 October 1994, is the provision of light-water reactors by the United States on the condition of a freeze on our nuclear activities.

Seven years have passed since the adoption of the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. During this period, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been fully carrying out its obligations under the Agreed Framework, including freezing our graphite-moderated reactors. However, the United States is not implementing the Agreed Framework in good faith. The project for the light-water reactors, which is to be finished by 2003, is only at the ground-excavation phase.

The United States is not providing due compensation for our loss of electricity resulting from the delay in constructing light-water reactors; it would rather take up the issue of inspections. This cannot be

construed as anything but an attempt to impose upon us the blame for the delay in the construction of the light-water reactors and to scrap the Agreed Framework. However, the draft resolution ignores the essence of the issue and arbitrarily forces my country to implement the safeguards agreement. A safeguards agreement is not a matter to be implemented by using pressure. The solution to the issue lies in the implementation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea/United States Agreed Framework.

My delegation would once again like to make clear its position that the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is not a matter to be addressed at the United Nations, but rather one to be settled between the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea and the United States. My delegation will therefore vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.10.

Mr. Mehta (India): India, a founding member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), attaches the highest importance and value to the objectives of the Agency. Since draft resolution A/56/L.10 pertains to the activities of the IAEA, we will go along with it. Nevertheless, we have considerable difficulty with the third preambular paragraph.

The language in that paragraph appears to link adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) with the freedom of research, development, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The statute of the IAEA, which must guide all our deliberations on the activities of the Agency, calls on the Agency to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Furthermore, the statute stresses the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members. The purpose of those provisions in the statute of the IAEA is obviously to encourage unfettered access of Member States to the peaceful uses of atomic energy without any discrimination whatsoever, albeit with appropriate safeguards.

The IAEA statute predates the NPT. Also, the Agency has not been designated secretariat of the NPT. The Agency merely carries out safeguards activities with the various member States in accordance with agreements; and the concept of safeguards itself predates the NPT. The NPT is not an equitable Treaty. Also, the provisions of article VI of the NPT have not been fulfilled by the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. The NPT should therefore not be used to discriminate between members of the IAEA. By implying that adherence to the NPT — on which my Government's views are well known — alone would mean access to the peaceful uses of atomic energy, the draft resolution deviates from and, in fact, derogates the objectives enshrined in the statute of the IAEA.

We have therefore been constrained to call for a vote on the third preambular paragraph, and shall vote against it.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq): My delegation regrets that its draft amendment has not been adopted by the General Assembly. It would have reflected the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq as mentioned in IAEA documents. Considering the current unbalanced state of the draft resolution, my delegation has no choice but to ask for a separate vote on paragraph 12, in view of the fact that Iraq has fully complied with all its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

I should like to quote from paragraph 35 of the report of IAEA to the Security Council dated 27 July 1998 (S/1998/694):

> "As previously recorded, there are no indications of Iraq having retained any physical capability for the indigenous production of weapon-usable nuclear material in amounts of any practical significance, nor any indication Iraq has acquired or produced weapon-usable nuclear material other than the nuclear material verified by IAEA and removed from Iraq in accordance with paragraph 13 of resolution 687 (1991)."

I therefore would ask representatives to support my delegation and, given the facts I have mentioned earlier, vote against paragraph 12 of the draft resolution before us.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

Separate votes have been requested on the third preambular paragraph, operative paragraph 5, operative paragraph 10 and operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

If there is no objection, we will therefore proceed accordingly.

I now put to the vote the third preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Pakistan

The third preambular paragraph was retained by 127 votes to 2, with 6 abstentions.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, India, Pakistan, Syrian Arab Republic

Operative paragraph 5 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 130 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Operative paragraph 10 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 136 votes to 2.

The President: I now put to the vote operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yugoslavia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Zambia

Operative paragraph 12 of draft resolution A/56/L.10 was retained by 119 votes to none, with 14 abstentions.

The President: Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft, Suriname has become a co-sponsor of A/56/L.10.

I now put to the vote draft resolution A/56/L.10 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Lao People's Democratic Republic

Draft resolution 56/94 was adopted by 150 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions (resolution 56/94).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives wishing to make statements in explanation of vote. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor after the vote on draft resolution A/56/L.10, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", to explain Pakistan's position on the third preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 5. My delegation abstained in the voting on those paragraphs.

The language of the third preambular paragraph, which links the right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), is not acceptable to us. Since Pakistan is not a party to the NPT, we cannot accept any commitment on its behalf.

Similarly, we recorded our reservations on language in the first part of operative paragraph 5, which reads in part as follows:

> "bearing in mind the importance of achieving the universal application of the safeguards system of the Agency, urges all States which have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible".

In our view, the International Atomic Energy Agency's role is to facilitate the technical safeguards and not to indulge in taking political decisions.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of resolution 56/94, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency", as a whole. The Chinese delegation is of the view that the Agency has done a great deal of fruitful work and achieved significant progress in many areas over the past year for which we wish to express our appreciation.

The Chinese delegation wishes to explain its position on the following issues.

With respect to the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Chinese Government's principled position on this question remains unchanged. We have always supported the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the maintenance of peace and stability there. The parties

concerned need to seek an appropriate solution to the nuclear issue concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea through constructive dialogue, consultations and good-faith cooperation. The countries concerned also need to pursue their dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the basis of equality and mutual respect and to faithfully implement the relevant Agreement.

As regards Iraq, the Chinese delegation is of the view that the prolongation of the problem without resolution has aggravated the humanitarian crisis there and is not conducive to the peace and stability of the Gulf region. The relevant resolutions of the Security Council should be implemented fully and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected. China calls for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq as soon as possible on the basis of an objective assessment of Iraq's implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba has again this year voted in favour of the resolution on the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our support reflects the great importance that Cuba attaches to the Agency's work.

As we said in the debate on this subject some weeks ago, Cuba highly appreciates the IAEA's work and achievements in the area of technical assistance and cooperation, safeguards and nuclear safety. At the same time, we regret that the resolution includes controversial language that does not enjoy the support of all delegations.

For technical and political reasons, the General Assembly should not become a forum for the reproduction of debates on sensitive issues considered by the States members of the IAEA. Reopening such debates in the General Assembly is technically inappropriate because many delegations in New York cannot give rigorous follow-up to the debates held in Vienna and therefore do not have all the background information needed to reopen in this forum serious negotiations on highly sensitive issues.

Even more important than the technical considerations, however, we believe that, from the political standpoint, the voting that is traditionally held when action is taken on resolutions devoted to the Agency's annual report does not contribute positively to the work of the IAEA. Many international organizations that submit reports to the United Nations consider in their own forums controversial issues on which divisions exist among their member States. However, the resolutions that we adopt here on those organizations do not reproduce the controversial aspects and are adopted without a vote. We do not believe that the resolution on the IAEA's report should be an exception to the rule.

That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 12 and would have abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 11 if it had been submitted to a separate vote. Cuba voted against the motion of no action on the amendment contained in document A/56/L.11 because we felt that it prevented Member States from exercising their legitimate right to express their position on a highly relevant substantive issue in the context of the draft resolution under consideration.

The third preambular paragraph establishes a link between the rights of States to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and their adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Cuba's position on the NPT is well known. We believe that it is selective and discriminatory in its essence, which establishes two categories of States with different rights and obligations and legitimizes the possession of nuclear weapons by one group of countries. For all these reasons, Cuba did not support the wording in the third preambular paragraph and abstained in the voting on it.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 56/94 on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Our position reflects our conviction that the resolution constitutes a basis for the strengthening of the IAEA's safeguards regime, which in turn is a means of maintaining international security.

However, my delegation expresses its concerns and fear that the constant precedence accorded to the development of the safeguards regime over other programmes of the Agency will upset the balance sought by the developing countries in the Agency's programmes and budget. It should be noted that the General Assembly is not entitled to define the priorities of the Agency's work, which is the prerogative of the IAEA Board of Governors.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 14?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 29 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/56/L.48)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 58th and 59th plenary meetings, on 19 November 2001.

The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.48.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.48?

Draft resolution A/56/L.48 was adopted (resolution 56/95).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 29.

Agenda item 35 (*continued*)

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Draft resolution (A/56/L.46)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 83rd plenary meeting, on 11 December 2001.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.46.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that since its introduction, the following countries have become sponsors: Cyprus, Ethiopia, Liechtenstein, New Zealand and Venezuela.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.46?

Draft resolution A/56/L.46 was adopted (resolution 56/96).

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Madej (Poland): I am speaking on behalf of the members of the Convening Group of the Community of Democracies, namely, Chile, the Czech Republic, India, Mali, Mexico, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of South Africa, the United States of America and my own country, Poland, to welcome the adoption of the resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The United Nations system as a whole continues to play a substantial role in providing timely, coherent and adequate support for Member States in their efforts to achieve democratization and good governance. Consolidating and promoting democratic principles and practices, in particular in new or restored democracies, should remain one of the main tasks of the Organization.

The Convening Group of the Community of Democracies particular note of the observation of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 33 of his report (A/56/499) on the issue that two international forums — namely, the Conference of New or Restored Democracies and the Community of Democracies — play an important role in mobilizing the political will for advancing democratic values, principles and practices and ensuring that the lessons learned from democratization processes in various parts of the world will not be lost by future generations.

Ms. Tobing-Klein (Suriname): Suriname is very satisfied with the debate on agenda item 35 and its outcome, regarding the strengthening and consolidation of democracy, peace, security and the rule of law in our countries. Suriname attaches great importance to the strengthening and consolidation of new or restored democracies, and congratulates Benin and the international community on the important Cotonou Declaration.

The experiences of Suriname, after the past serious disruptions of our democratic system, have taught us that continued attention and action are needed to develop and maintain a true democratic culture in

which, peace, security, respect for human rights, good governance and the rule of law can prevail. Suriname has therefore paid special attention in its Multi-Annual Development Plan for 2001-2005 to democracy, good governance, and the restoration and rehabilitation of democratic order and a constitutional State. A true partnership between Government, civil society and non-governmental organizations is indeed a condition sine qua non for the realization of these noble goals.

In the preparatory process for its participation in the important Organization of American States (OAS) General Assembly meetings in Costa Rica and Peru earlier this year, Suriname organized a broad consultation with organizations for women, youth, churches, entrepreneurs, trade unions and human rights institutions to discuss the draft Inter-American Democratic Charter. Suriname was one of the countries that adopted by acclamation the Democratic Charter at the twenty-eighth special session of the OAS in Lima, Peru, on 11 September 2001.

Suriname is very pleased at the central role of democracy in that Charter, in which democracy and its relationship to human rights, integral development and the war on poverty are crucial. In addition, Suriname welcomes the protection provided to member countries by the provisions of the Democratic Charter in the event of disruption or unconstitutional alteration of democratic order.

In conclusion, Suriname is grateful for the generous support we are receiving from the international community, including the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the OAS and countries such as the Netherlands, for the process of democratization and the consolidation of our democratic institutions.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Australia on a point of order.

Mr. Stuart (Australia): We raised our flag earlier as one of the sponsors of the draft resolution proposed by the delegation of Benin, on support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We had signed the lists of sponsors held by the delegation of Benin and the Secretariat. We are puzzled that we do not appear as a sponsor and hope that this can be rectified in the record of the meeting.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Benin on a point of order.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I would like to recall, for the benefit of the Secretariat, that when I introduced the draft resolution during the preceding meeting, we provided a list of the names of all of the countries that were kind enough to sponsor the draft resolution. I should like, therefore, to stress that the names of all of the countries that we mentioned earlier, which are sponsors of the draft resolution, should appear in document A/56/L.46/Rev.1 when it is issued.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 33 (*continued*)

Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin

Draft resolution (A/56/L.41/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate on this agenda item at its 81st and 82nd plenary meetings on 10 December 2001.

The Assembly will take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay and Tonga.

Are there any other sponsors? Yemen indicates that it wishes to be included as a sponsor of draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/56/L.41/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 56/97).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 21 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(a) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System

Draft resolution (A/56/L.43)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly held a debate under agenda item 21 and its sub-items (a) to (m) at its 77th to 80th plenary meetings, on 6 and 7 December 2001.

I give the floor to the representative of Jamaica to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.43.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I have the honour to present the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", contained in document A/56/L.43, further to the statement I made on behalf of the Group under agenda item 21 in connection with the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/56/171.

I would like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Chile and the Dominican Republic.

This draft resolution, which is presented biennially to the General Assembly, aims at encouraging greater cooperation in support of economic and social development in the region between the Latin American Economic System (SELA) and the United Nations organizations, agencies and programmes, particularly the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. It is essentially an update of resolution 54/8, which was adopted by consensus during the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, in 1999.

In the preambular part of the draft resolution, reference is made, inter alia, to the Agreement between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System, in which both parties agree to strengthen and expand their cooperation in matters that are of common concern in the field of their respective competence, further to their constitutional instruments. Reference is also made to the joint activities that SELA is developing with the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system. Finally, the preamble welcomes the continued monitoring and changes in the treatment of topics relating to the United Nations system, in close contact with the delegations of Member States participating in such deliberations.

In the operative part of the draft resolution, the General Assembly will urge the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to continue deepening its coordination and mutual support with SELA. It will also urge the United Nations Development Programme to continue its financial and technical cooperation programmes that the Permanent Secretariat of SELA is carrying out in areas of mutual interest and concern. Lastly, it will urge the specialized agencies and other funds and programmes of the United Nations system to continue and intensify their support for, and cooperation in the activities of, SELA.

In operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly reiterates its request that both the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Permanent Secretary of SELA assess the implementation of the Agreement between the two bodies and report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Finally, in operative paragraph 6 the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

I wish to conclude by commending to the General Assembly the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.43 for adoption by consensus.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.43.

Before proceeding to take action, I should like to announce that the following countries have also become sponsors of draft resolution A/56/L.43: Dominica, Guatemala, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.43?

Draft resolution A/56/L.43 was adopted (resolution 56/98).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (a) of agenda item 21?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/56/3 and Add.1 and 2)

The President: The General Assembly will now consider agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", in accordance with its decision adopted at the 43rd plenary meeting, on 9 November 2001.

I give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council to introduce the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (spoke in French): On 9 November 2001, the General Assembly decided to place on its agenda the consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2001. The Economic and Social Council welcomes that decision, which is indeed a historical one.

Contrary to what is customarily done for the other two main bodies — the Security Council and the International Court of Justice — hitherto the General Assembly dealt with the annual report of the Economic and Social Council in a piecemeal fashion. Although the Assembly dealt directly with a limited number of issues, it nonetheless entrusted the consideration of most of this report to its main committees, primarily the Second Committee, the Third Committee and the Fifth Committee.

That approach, admittedly, did have one major benefit, which we welcomed: it ensured a certain degree of efficiency from a sectoral perspective. However, it is also true — and regrettable — that over the years that approach contributed to blurring the image of the Economic and Social Council, because it did not allow for an overall perception of its work or for an understanding of its strategic approaches.

The General Assembly, in deciding to consider the report of the Economic and Social Council, in accordance with the Charter, not only set out to restore a proper balance to the situation, but also — and most importantly — made clear, through this decisive act, its desire to become actively involved in the process of renewal and revitalization of the work of the Council, begun a few years ago.

On behalf of the President of the Economic and Social Council, I should like sincerely to thank the Assembly and to express our gratitude to it for this decision.

The Assembly will recall that last year the heads of State or Government welcomed the renewed dynamism of the Economic and Social Council, which is much more in keeping with the mandate entrusted to it under the Charter. The Assembly's decision to give due consideration to our report is indeed deeply appreciated by our heads of State.

The Economic and Social Council is entrusted with providing general guidance to those bodies of the United Nations system that are charged with the promotion of economic and social development, and also with coordinating their activities. The Council also coordinates the follow-up of the outcome of major international conferences in the economic and social fields and in other related areas.

That is why the Economic and Social Council has devoted considerable time and effort to the systematic follow-up of the development strategies emanating from the major conferences and summit meetings held under the auspices of the United Nations in the 1990s, including the decisions taken in the context of the five-year follow-up to these meetings.

The role of the Council has also been pivotal in the implementation of the recommendations and decisions flowing from international conferences from the integration of women and human settlements.

It is against that backdrop that the Economic and Social Council undertook more closely to supervise its technical committees by emphasizing coordinated follow-up of these major conferences. Closer links between the Council and its technical bodies have allowed for a more coherent approach and for more efficient and effective methods of work.

The working relationship between the Council and the five regional economic commissions has also been better defined. A dialogue with their respective Executive Secretaries on a specific topic is held every year, and their contribution is increasingly enriching the work of the Economic and Social Council.

In keeping with its mandate, the Council in recent years has spared no effort in bringing together all of the development partners, with a view to enhancing cooperation and to harmonizing the policies of the various United Nations bodies, in order to maximize their results in the area of development and, more specifically, in the area of the combat against poverty, whose eradication remains our top priority.

This prioritization of the combat against poverty and underdevelopment has placed Africa at the very centre of the concerns of the Economic and Social Council, which has devoted a large part of its work to that continent, undertaking a detailed examination of the reasons for Africa's economic backwardness and endeavouring to identify ways and means of integrating it into an increasingly competitive global economy.

The special attention accorded to the situation of Africa reached its apex last July. During the high-level segment of its substantive session, the Economic and Social Council undertook to reflect on the role that the United Nations system — that is, we the Member States — should play in order effectively to support Africa's efforts to achieve sustainable development. In keeping with the guidelines set out by the heads of State or Government in the Millennium Declaration, the Economic and Social Council subsequently adopted a Ministerial Declaration setting out specific measures to be taken by the international community to foster Africa's development.

The General Assembly should give equitable and appropriate consideration to that Declaration, which is one of the key elements of the report before the Assembly. As a leading international body in the area of economic and social issues, the Council contributed to the mobilizing, along with States, of the heads of the financial institutions and of the specialized agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and all the other development partners, in support of the new African initiative, now called the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The report before the Assembly contains compelling proposals regarding the implementation of that initiative.

The Council has played a major role in drawing the attention of international organizations to the importance of information and communication technologies in development efforts, based on the 2000 ministerial declaration on the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based economy.

Following the impetus given by the Economic and Social Council, a working group on information and communication technologies was set up here at United Nations Headquarters on 20 November last, during a ceremony at which we had the honour and privilege, Sir, of your presence.

We have been monitoring more closely the implementation of policies by United Nations funds and programmes in the context of their operational activities and thus assisted the General Assembly in its triennial consideration of operational activities.

The institutionalization of a debate on humanitarian affairs, pursuant to resolution 52/12 B, has made possible the consideration of broader general policy issues in this field.

Globalization, and its various forms it takes, has become one of the determining factors in decision-making processes at both the national and international levels. Accordingly, the Economic and Social Council has contributed to the creation of fresh opportunities and new ways for the many stakeholders to become involved in the promotion of development.

For instance, the Council has played a central role in the promotion of cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions. Since 1998, a special high-level meeting devoted to financing and development issues has been held each year among representatives of the Council and of the Bretton Woods institutions. This year's high-level meeting, held on 1 May, was particularly useful. In the debates in plenary and at the two round tables, participants engaged in a very broad and deep exchange of views on urgent and painful problems of development. A summary of that debate is contained in the report.

Similarly, the Economic and Social Council organizes an annual dialogue on general policy issues with the heads of international financial and trade institutions in order to take stock of the world economic situation. The Council also organizes thematic meetings with representatives of specialized

agencies and meetings devoted to considering the decisions adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

The Council's ability to bring together representatives of Governments, bodies of the United Nations system, civil society and the private sector to discuss and debate economic and social issues is now fully recognized. The Council's preparation and organization of high-level debates are exemplary in that regard. The preparation for the high-level segments include the convening of a series of information meetings and round tables. In these preparatory meetings, representatives of Governments and the public sector participate alongside those of the private sector, civil society and international organizations.

At the 2001 substantive session, the Council was confirmed in its conviction that, if its work is to result in success, civil society as a whole must be involved. Thus, the African Forum for Investment Promotion, held in 2001 in parallel with the high-level segment, brought together African ministers, representatives of African private companies and trade unions, investors and the representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and of regional and subregional development bodies.

The forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which was also convened in parallel with the high-level segment, brought together for the first time an impressive number of organizations dedicated to finding the best possible way for the international community to assist Africa to achieving sustainable development. The commitment of NGOs to the work of the Economic and Social Council was reflected in the recent convening in Dakar of the first seminar on the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted in July 2001. This is an opportune moment to welcome the imminent establishment in Tunis of informal NGO networks to cover each of the major regions of the world. These networks will allow all agencies of civil society not only to be better informed of the Organization's work, but also and above all to contribute to its success and perpetuation. The Dakar seminar was eloquent testimony to that effect.

As can be seen, the Council has been able in many respects to discharge its duties effectively. However, it is aware that, due to a number of new developments, it must continuously reconsider substantive issues and procedures. Thus will it remain at the forefront of the debate on world development. Given these considerations, the Council decided to follow up on the commitment made by the heads of State and Government in the Millennium Declaration to further strengthen itself and to capitalize on its recent successes so as to play to the full the role assigned to it by the Charter. That commitment will be the subject of next year's debate on coordination questions.

Without wishing to pre-empt the conclusions to be reached by the Council or the recommendations to be made by the General Assembly following its consideration of this item, I would mention certain key concepts to guide the next phase of the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

First of all, I would suggest that the Council play an even more prominent role in the debate on globalization to be undertaken by the intergovernmental bodies. Given its responsibility in the economic, social and related spheres, we feel that the Council is in a position to draw attention to all the essential aspects of the debate on development. The Council also plays a leading role in the follow-up to United Nations conferences and is thus naturally in a position to enhance that role over the next two years. Members will recall that several highly important conferences, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, are scheduled for that period. Moreover, the Council's role in the support to be offered to the General Assembly with respect to the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration will have to be specified.

Secondly, I feel it necessary to suggest that the Council consider in greater depth the socio-economic aspects of conflict prevention, reconstruction, post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building not only to strengthen the dialectic relationship between peace and development, but also to ensure improved coordination of work in that field. Such activities could also offer new opportunities for interaction between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

Thirdly, we must strive to increase the impact of the Council's work on all the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations system.

The Council has proved to be a unique forum that bring together senior officials and the heads of various sectoral ministries to discuss issues of common interest. However, additional arrangements should be made to develop this dialogue and ensure that such debates and exchanges of views, as well as their conclusions, will also be at the centre of discussions within intergovernmental bodies, such as the General Assembly's Second and Third Committees. This, of course, should in no way reflect on the value of an open and frank debate that does not necessarily lead to the adoption of agreed conclusions.

More attention should also be given to our relationships with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and national bodies, in particular national economic and social councils, so that the Economic and Social Council will be able to fulfil its guiding role with regard to development. As I said earlier, the success of the African Forum for Investment Promotion and the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations has strengthened our belief in the importance of the contribution of these development actors to the United Nations in the new millennium.

Fourthly, it is important not only to develop policies coherently in the economic, social and related fields, but also to ensure coordination, in particular between the Council and its subsidiary bodies, the development bodies of the United Nations system and the other stakeholders, and also among the principal organs of the Organization. The meetings of the Bureaux of these organs, supported by the Secretary-General, are certainly important but can in no way replace Member States in the role of offering constructive observations on the Council's report.

In this regard, the Assembly's consideration of the Council's report today is, in my view, of great importance that is not only symbolic, because the debate will be devoted to fundamental issues. This consideration should confirm the usefulness of the work of the Social and Economic Council, particularly in 2001, and will be a valuable guide as we pursue efforts to improve further the work of the Council and identify new areas to explore.

These are the observations I felt duty-bound to make as the General Assembly takes up for the first time its consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the other associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, associate themselves with this statement.

The General Assembly is called upon today to debate the report submitted by the Economic and Social Council contained in document A/56/3. The Assembly does so in the spirit of one of the first of the purposes and principles established by the Charter of the United Nations, set out in Article 1, paragraph 3:

> "To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion".

The Economic and Social Council is the key United Nations body as regards sustainable economic and social development, and therefore its report deserves the closest possible attention. The EU fully supported the approach adopted by Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, President of the Economic and Social Council, to have item 12 and the entire Council report addressed in plenary. We welcome this new procedure, which gives a somewhat higher profile to the status and importance of the decisions taken by the Council.

Let me return briefly to the Council's summer session in order to highlight the salient points. First of all, the European Union welcomes the fact that the Economic and Social Council devoted its principal debate to Africa, under the theme "The role of the United Nations system in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development". The African continent is one of the European Union's priorities; indeed, the EU is Africa's single largest donor and its leading trading partner.

Some aspects of this African debate are being pursued further in the General Assembly. The Union is pleased that the African heads of State launched the New African Initiative (NAI) this summer. We also welcome the decision taken in October to incorporate this initiative into the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Africa is on the way to taking better

charge of its own development and its own future. The EU will support these efforts.

We welcome the quality of the debate held in the coordination segment last summer concerning technologies and public-private partnerships. The Assembly, under agenda item 39, was able to pursue this dialogue on global partnerships, taking the Council's agreed conclusions into account. This thematic interaction between the Council and the General Assembly is a most promising development and should be encouraged.

In another, equally fundamental area — the operational activities segment — the Economic and Social Council initiated a discussion on the triennial review of the operational activities of the various United Nations funds and programmes. This made for an open-ended discussion with the heads of the agencies concerned of the major trends and new ideas connected with the triennial review. The EU believes that the Economic and Social Council is the body best placed to coordinate operational activities for development, in particular on cross-sectoral or thematic issues.

The humanitarian segment is an essential part of the Council's coordination mandate. The EU reaffirms its full commitment to greater coordination of efforts in order to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, whether in natural disasters or in response to complex crises. The European Union attaches particular importance to aid given to internally displaced persons. Therefore, we welcome the unanimous support of Council members for the creation of a unit within the Secretariat to look after their specific needs.

In this context, efforts have been made to encourage and stimulate improved coordination and communication between the major bodies involved in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, in particular the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The goal is to ensure effective support on the part of Member States for an integrated approach to the problem. The International Peace Academy recently organized a seminar on this subject in which representatives of 30 Member States took part. The conclusions of the seminar were officially transmitted to the Assembly in document A/56/607. The European Union believes that we must examine more closely issues of closer interaction and improved information-sharing between the two bodies so as to promote an integrated approach to strengthening peace and post-conflict reconstruction. We must do our utmost to ensure for those affected by conflict that there is an intergovernmental process here in New York capable of having a real and positive impact on their lives.

The European Union expresses its satisfaction with regard to the way in which the Council's human rights activities evolved during the general segment. The Council was able to adopt, without a vote, a series of decisions taken in the Commission on Human Rights. After lengthy negotiations, it was able to respond, positively and by consensus, to the request of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for a debate on the question of Myanmar's compliance with the Forced Labour Convention (No. 29) of 1930. The credibility of both the Council and the ILO were at stake in that regard.

The European Union would like to take the opportunity provided by today's debate in plenary meeting to call on the Assembly to respond in a positive manner to the specific recommendation of the Council for a fundamental review, in the General Assembly, of the procedures for considering and following up on major United Nations conferences with regard to both format and frequency. The Council adopted a consensus resolution on the integrated follow-up to the major conferences and on the working methods of the functional committees. This question must also be discussed here in the General Assembly. We therefore support the proposal to include the question of follow-up to major conferences on the agenda of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

Next year, the Economic and Social Council will consider the important issue of human resources for development, in particular the measures to be taken in relation to education and health. The European Union is determined to make a constructive and positive contribution to consideration of these problems.

The European Union remains deeply committed to the process of revitalizing and gradually strengthening the coordinating role of the Economic and Social Council. The European Union supports the initiatives aimed at ensuring coordination and consistency between economic and social questions during, for example, the special annual meeting

between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions. As a major Charter body, the Economic and Social Council must be in a position effectively to discharge its lofty task. That was one of the fundamental commitments undertaken last year in the Millennium Declaration. In this connection, we welcome the choice of the theme of the coordination segment that has been selected for next year. It will provide an opportunity to reconsider, in a substantial manner, the working methods of the Economic and Social Council.

Finally, the European Union regrets the fact that work on a number of decisions and agenda items was not finalized during the substantive session in July. It is equally regrettable that the decisions and conclusions of subsidiary bodies are sometimes called into question. The Economic and Social Council is responsible for coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in the economic and social area; it is not a court of appeal.

Mr. Simonović (Croatia): It is a great honour for me to speak on the issue of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2001, given the fact that this is the first time in the history of the United Nations that it is being debated in plenary meeting in the General Assembly. This is also a special occasion because, on 10 December — United Nations Human Rights Day — the Secretary-General of the United Nations accepted the Nobel Peace Prize — in recognition not only of the role played by him and by the United Nations in the past, but also of the role to be played in the future. Speaking about perspectives, the Secretary-General pointed out three key priorities for the United Nations in this century: eradicating poverty, preventing conflict and promoting democracy. Today, in discussing the report of the Economic and Social Council, we must consider its role in achieving those priorities, as well as the role ascribed to it under the United Nations Charter.

There is no doubt that the Economic and Social Council has gained in stature in recent years and that the present international environment is conducive to the further elaboration of its significant function. Greater interest in, and the resurgence of the importance of, the Economic and Social Council can be attributed in part to its relevance in this era of globalization and rediscovered global interdependence since the tragedy of 11 September. More than ever before, great benefits can be derived from a multilateral approach to economic and social concerns. The Economic and Social Council, as a principal United Nations body, has an important role in this regard, as well as comparative advantages which should be better exploited in its future activities.

The broad system of subsidiary bodies and functional commissions adds a particularly important dimension of expert input to the work of the Economic and Social Council. Consequently, my delegation values the central role of the relevant functional commissions in the review and follow-up processes of major United Nations conferences, as well as the coordinating dimension of the Economic and Social Council. In this context, the decisions of the substantive session, held in July, represent an important component of the continuing process of assessing progress and adjusting policy in the field of integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

The increasing development of the Economic and Social Council as a forum for policy dialogue was again demonstrated by the special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions held in May this year. Following on from the first meeting of this type within the United Nations system, held in 1998, the idea has been developed further, in terms of better organization, choice of theme, interactive round-table format and participation.

Undoubtedly, this event provides a unique opportunity for policy makers in finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation to engage in a meaningful dialogue. Furthermore, it serves as an excellent forum for strengthening links between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

However, we should not stop there. The overriding task now is to enhance the effectiveness of this interaction with the Economic and Social Council so as to include all relevant stakeholders — such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the private and civil sectors — as the primary instruments for developing a common vision in the economic and social fields.

As we look ahead, we hope that full use will be made of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next year, to build stronger and more efficacious

cooperation, with a view to developing a strategic plan of action for development. Indeed, a vital role could be played by the Economic and Social Council in coordinating a follow-up mechanism to Monterrey. It could serve as the body that oversees not only the substantive engagement and monitoring of implementation of commitments made at the Conference itself, but, more importantly, those derived from the Millennium Declaration.

On the issue of reform, my delegation also appreciates the steps taken to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council and improving its methods of work. We support further activities by the Bureau and the membership of the Council towards the full implementation of proposed reforms in the economic and social fields. The success of the thematic panels held during the year in preparation of the theme of the high-level segment has confirmed the highest level of professionalism and quality in choosing both the themes and the panellists. This practice has also contributed to transforming the Economic and Social Council into a year-round working body, a trend that should, in our view, be strongly supported.

Regarding recent developments in the field of peace-building and peacekeeping worldwide, it is clear that in a post-conflict environment there is a great potential for further cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the rest of the United Nations system. Therefore, a clearly defined role for the Economic and Social Council, including its cooperation with the other main bodies of the Organization, will continue to be very important for the efficient functioning of the United Nations system as a whole.

In that context, I wish to reiterate the necessity of cooperation between the two Councils — the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council — which should be guided by the principles of capacity-sharing. Especially in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building, the expertise of the Economic and Social Council regarding economic, social and cultural issues is crucial for the identification and removal of causes of potential conflict.

An important contribution to that end was the round table discussion recently organized by the International Peace Academy on the issue of the respective roles of the primary intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and cooperation and coordination between them in order to increase effectiveness in peace-building. The discussion suggested that the comparative advantages of the Economic and Social Council lie in several areas: its ability to bring together research and policy planning with operational activities and civil society participation, its link to the broader United Nations system through the Administrative Committee on Coordination, its special coordination role in relation to subsidiary machinery and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, its increasingly close relationship with the international financial institutions as part of the financing for development process, and its responsibility as an institutional base for coordination with respect to the executive boards of United Nations funds and programmes. The functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council could also contribute to operations on the ground. The conclusions of this discussion have been distributed under this agenda item in a letter by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands.

Finally, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, for this initiative to place the report of the Economic and Social Council on the General Assembly's agenda for the first time, as well as for his guidance and successful completion of the work of the Council in the year 2001. With his wealth of experience and diplomatic skills, he has greatly contributed to the strengthening of this important body.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou, whose outstanding leadership has enabled the Council to successfully carry out its demanding tasks. My appreciation also goes to the members of the Bureau for their steadfast support and dedication. In our view, the report of the Economic and Social Council and its addenda, though concise, provide us with a complete overview of all the proceedings and highlights of the Council in 2001.

Serving as a member of the Economic and Social Council, as well as of many of its subsidiary organs, the Republic of Korea wholeheartedly supports the new arrangements in the General Assembly for considering the work of the Economic and Social Council in plenary meeting. Given the magnitude and implications

of the Council's work for the entire United Nations system and beyond, key policy issues in the socio-economic fields need to be thoroughly scrutinized in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly, and feedback should be given to the Council if necessary.

In that regard, my delegation has been a strong supporter of the Economic and Social Council's resolution 2001/21 — among others — which recommends that the General Assembly examine the effectiveness of the review mechanisms for the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits of the 1990s. The resolution also decided to strengthen the Economic and Social Council's links with the General Assembly by bringing to its attention overarching policy issues.

I would also like to refer to the high-level special meetings of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, which were initiated by General Assembly resolution 50/227 with a view to revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. This year's special meeting was particularly remarkable, as it was held against the backdrop of a global economic slowdown. It is my sincere hope that more of these high-level dialogues on key policies and institutions will be further promoted.

Among the numerous achievements of the 2001 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, the Republic of Korea attaches great significance to the outcome of the high-level segment, which produced an excellent ministerial declaration on the sustainable development of Africa. Given the development targets set out in the Millennium Declaration, including the overarching goal of halving the proportion of people in extreme poverty by the year 2015, the theme and outcome of the high-level segment was most appropriate.

It was particularly meaningful that, before the high-level segment, African leaders heralded a comprehensive strategy of new African initiatives, which were later renamed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I am confident that the General Assembly will consider the ten-year review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) while taking into account, among other things, the outcome of the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on Africa.

The result of the coordination segment on the role of information and communication technologies was also commendable, as the agreed conclusion provides a number of policy options to promote information and communication technologies and to bridge the digital divide. The Council also highlighted the difficulties faced by developing countries in tapping the benefits of globalization, and called for strengthening the catalytic role of the United Nations in promoting access to knowledge and the transfer of technology to developing countries.

Many delegations have stressed the importance of closing the widening gap in digital capacities between developed and developing countries. In this context, I would like to underscore the need for the General Assembly to take up the issue of the digital divide, through in-depth discussions, to pave the way for substantive progress in this field.

I would like briefly to touch upon the work of the Council in the field of humanitarian assistance. In the light of the Economic and Social Council's important role in providing guidance to the United Nations system on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, it is quite regrettable that the Council has failed to produce an agreed conclusion. I sincerely hope that this will not set a precedent and that we will succeed in formulating an agreed conclusion in 2002.

Bearing in mind that a well-coordinated approach among the principal organs of the United Nations will produce synergy, the Republic of Korea hopes that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council will further explore avenues to enhance cooperation and policy coherence in a mutually reinforcing manner. In this context, I would like to commend the arrangement by which the presidents of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council meet frequently to discuss and resolve pending issues and to map out future directions for the causes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Shah (Nepal): At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Economic and Social Council for its 2001 report, contained in document A/56/3 and its addenda. Nepal attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council and supports its activities, which are aimed at promoting social and economic development in the world and at improving the

standard of living of the billions of poor people in the world.

The Charter has mandated the United Nations to promote high standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development, which are of foremost importance in their own right. These endeavours assume even more significance in view of the indissociable nexus between development and peace and justice. While the Economic and Social Council's scope of work and its relevance are global, the vast bulk of that work is concentrated on the developing countries, where two-thirds of the world population and the majority of the poor live.

As the Economic and Social Council is the leading organ for the coordination of all social and economic activities under the auspices of the United Nations, there is an undeniable imperative for it to meet its responsibilities. This means that on the one hand, the Council must try to meet the challenges posed by its daunting scope of work, and, on the other, there must also be a clear recognition of, and deference to, its role in the United Nations system and beyond.

In this context, coordination between the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations agencies, and the mechanisms necessary to ensure it, become critically important in the successful implementation of the economic and social policies of the United Nations. Moreover, this will also promote synergy with respect to other areas of work, notably international peace and security, in which other organs of the United Nations might have the primary responsibility.

Effective coordination is essential between the Economic and Social Council and other international organizations, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization, regional banks, the private sector and civil society. In today's world, all of these key stakeholders are the principal players in reducing poverty, fostering development, expanding fair trade, ensuring a stable and conducive external environment and injecting external resources, all of which are necessary to fulfil the Council's mandate.

The Economic and Social Council cannot conceivably discharge its growing responsibility with the kind of Secretariat support that has been provided to date. Therefore, Nepal strongly believes that the Office of the President, as well as the secretariat of the Economic and Social Council, should be strengthened and provided with adequate financial and human resources, so that it can carry out its mandated tasks effectively.

Let me say a few words about the work of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. As in previous years, the Council, during its substantive session in July this year, considered a number of issues related to economic, social, cultural and humanitarian affairs and adopted many important resolutions in this respect. Of course, all of the issues considered by the Council are very important in their respective fields. However, my delegation finds particularly notable issues such as sustainable development, the global campaign for poverty eradication and the role of the United Nations in promoting development as well as the right to development, to food and to education.

Indeed, today, at a time when knowledge and technological development have become the principal engine of social and economic transformation, access to, and the transfer of, knowledge and technology must be accorded high priority. However, since the majority of the world's population still lives in poverty and has no access to the resources necessary to be connected with this new world, it has not yet been able to reap the full benefits of the information and communications revolution.

In this context, my delegation is encouraged by the adoption of the agreed conclusions of the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council. The agreed conclusions recognize the constraints I mentioned earlier and call for the strengthening of the United Nations system so that it can play a catalytic role in promoting the transfer of technology and access to knowledge, which is critical for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The agreed conclusions make various suggestions to the United Nations system to that effect. My delegation fully endorses these suggestions.

My delegation is also pleased to recall the three-day high-level segment of the substantive session, held from 16 to 18 July 2001, which, at the end of the segment, adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the role of the United Nations in support of the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development. Though Africa-specific, the declaration is no less relevant to other parts of the developing world, which share the same problems and prospects in the

consultation of emerging democracies, regional mechanisms for preventing conflicts and special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development. Nepal fully supports the content of the ministerial declaration.

To conclude, my delegation supports the work of the Economic and Social Council in general and encourages it to continue its efforts to uplift the socio-economic status of the poorest and the neediest, with particular focus on the least developing countries.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 12.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to remind members that, as announced earlier, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Third Committee on Wednesday, 19 December, in the morning.

Furthermore, as previously announced, the General Assembly will take up agenda item 20 (*f*), "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", together with agenda item 43, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security", on Thursday, 20 December, in the morning.

I should also like to inform members that consideration of agenda item 40, "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", originally scheduled for Tuesday, 18 December, in the morning, will now be taken up as the second item, on Thursday, 20 December, in the afternoon. As the first item for that afternoon, the General Assembly will consider agenda item 52, "Multilingualism".

On Friday, 21 December, in the morning, the General Assembly will consider the reports of the Second Committee.

Announcement

The President: I should like to make an announcement concerning the Consultative Process on Ocean Affairs.

Members will recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999, decided to establish an Open-ended Informal Consultative Process in order to facilitate the annual review by the General Assembly of developments in ocean affairs by considering the Secretary-General's report on oceans and the law of the sea. It also decided that the meeting of this process would be coordinated by two co-chairpersons, who would be appointed by the President of the General Assembly.

In this regard, the first and second meeting of the Consultative Process were held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 May to 2 June 2000 and from 7 to 11 May 2001. The two previous meetings were co-chaired by the Permanent Representative Samoa to the United Nations, Ambassador Tuiloma Slade, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom, appointed by my predecessor.

Members will further recall that the General Assembly, by its resolution 56/12 of 28 November 2001, requests the Secretary-General to convene the third meeting of the Consultative Process in New York from 8 to 15 April 2002.

With regard to the co-chairpersons of the third meeting of the Consultative Process next year, I have conducted extensive consultations, both through the chairs of regional groups and through a significant number of individual delegations representing all regions.

During these consultations, wide support was expressed once again for the co-chairpersons of the first and second meetings of the Consultative Process. Both of them were highly praised for their excellence as mediators and consensus builders.

It is therefore my pleasure to announce my decision to re-appoint Ambassador Tuiloma Slade, Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations, and Mr. Alan Simcock of the United Kingdom as the two co-chairpersons of the third meeting of the Consultative Process. I am confident that their leadership will greatly contribute to achieving a successful outcome to the meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.